

What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

Vocational Rehabilitation is a program supported by federal and state funds that is designed to assist eligible individuals with physical, learning or mental impairments prepare for employment.

In Missouri, vocational rehabilitation services are provided by two different agencies:

1. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), which provides services for persons with all types of disabilities.
2. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), which provides services for persons who are severely visually impaired or blind.

Why is VR an important partner in Transition?

Transition is a process a student moves through in order to prepare for post high school employment, education, specialized training and independence.

Schools are primarily responsible for providing transition services while a student is still in the secondary school system. However, when a student graduates or leaves school, he or she no longer receives school support or services.

As an adult service agency provider, VR may be able to continue to provide the necessary support and services to make the transition into a job or training program successful.

What is VR's role in the Transition Planning Process?

VR's primary role is to communicate and collaborate with schools to minimize gaps and delays from school to post-school activities. This can be accomplished through:

- identifying students with disabilities who may benefit from VR services early.
- creating awareness of the VR program among students, families and schools.
- establishing eligibility and linking students to VR prior to exit from school.
- providing transition services for students that go beyond the scope of special or regular education.

Which students may qualify for VR?

Referrals may include any student with a disability who receives special education services or who is enrolled in regular classes and who may need VR services to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment.

Referrals do not automatically result in eligibility for services. Students must be determined eligible through an individualized assessment process before receiving VR services.

At all stages throughout the VR program, students will be provided vocational information and guidance allowing them to make informed choices regarding their vocational plan.

What services can VR provide to eligible students?

Students with disabilities who are determined eligible for VR may receive one or more of the following services:

- assessment/ vocational evaluation
- Transition Services at Community Rehabilitation Programs
- career guidance and counseling
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Cooperative Work-Experience Program (COOP)
- assistance with job-seeking skills
- assistance with finding a job
- supported employment job coaching
- referral for sheltered employment certification
- assistive technology devices/ services
- personal/ vocational adjustment training and/ or college preparation training (provided by RSB)
- other services as determined necessary based on the individual student's needs

What services can VR provide prior to formal referral?

VR may provide the following general transition services to students, families and schools:

- consultation to students and families
- participation in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings
- technical assistance to schools

What is the Cooperative Work-Experience Program (COOP)?

COOP is one of six programs approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that provide students with school credit for participating in off-campus paid work experiences. It is one of several transition services provided by VR and works in partnership with individual school districts.

For a student to participate in COOP, the following guidelines must be met:

1. The school must have an approved agreement with VR or RSB. This agreement requires the school to assign a Work Experience Coordinator (WEC) to supervise the program.
2. The student must be receiving special education services through an IEP and be referred for this program by the school.
3. The student must be determined eligible for VR services.
4. A vocational rehabilitation Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) will be jointly developed by the student and VR counselor in coordination with the student's IEP.

Who pays for VR services?

Most services are provided at no cost to the student or family. However, payment for some services may be based on student and family income, resources and their ability to pay for the costs associated with a specific VR service.

Due to restricted funding, the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is unable to provide services to all individuals with disabilities at this time. A statewide Order of Selection has been implemented, and individuals will be served on the basis of the severity of their disability.

How are students referred to VR?

Students with disabilities may be referred to VR by:

- local school district personnel.
- the student's parent or guardian.
- self-referral.
- other agencies/organizations.

► Students with physical, learning or mental impairments should be referred to the nearest Division of Vocational Rehabilitation district office.

► Students with severe visual impairments or blindness should be referred to the nearest Rehabilitation Services for the Blind district office.

For more information

Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

For a listing of local VR district offices or to learn more about the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Transition Services in Missouri, contact:

Assistant Director of Transition Services
Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
3024 Dupont Circle
Jefferson City, MO 65109-6188

Phone: (573) 751-3251 • Toll-free: (877) 222-8963
TTY: (573) 751-0881 • Fax: (573) 751-1441
Web site: vr.dese.mo.gov

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

To learn more about Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and Transition Services in Missouri, call your local RSB office:

Toll-free: (800) 592-6004
Through Relay Missouri:
TTY: (800) 735-2966 • Voice: (800) 735-2460

Student/Family Transition Resources

To learn more about transition resources and training available to parents of children with disabilities, contact:

Missouri Parents Act (MPACT)
Toll-free: (800) 743-7634

Student Rights

To learn more about a student's legal rights in the area of transition services, contact:

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services
(MO P&A)
Toll-free: (800) 392-8667

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